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General and complete disarmament

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 72/47, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", the General Assembly invited all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General information on the measures they had adopted to promote the objectives envisaged in the resolution, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report containing that information to the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

2. Pursuant to that request, a note verbale was sent to Member States on 5 February 2018 inviting them to provide information on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Any replies received after 15 May 2018 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (www.un.org/disarmament) in the original language received. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[8 May 2018]

The observance of environmental norms should be an imperative in all aspects of public life, including in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control treaties.

In that regard, it should be noted that the second International Convention on Science, Technology and Innovation was held in Havana from 5 to 9 March. The programme comprised 10 parallel events, with the participation of over 1,200 professionals from 39 countries, and successfully addressed the question of the environment in the sphere of disarmament and security.

Cuba, which is a State party to, inter alia, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, ensures strict observance of environmental norms and the other obligations arising from those instruments.

The relevant Cuban authorities rigorously enforce a solid legal basis for the implementation of international obligations relating to the observance of environmental norms.

Cuba welcomes the signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and affirms the high priority placed on nuclear disarmament. It also greatly appreciates the fact that this international legal instrument includes specific provisions relating to the environment.

International peace and security, the fragile environmental balance of our planet and its sustainable development are seriously threatened by the continued refinement and latent possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction. Their total elimination is the only truly effective way to avoid harmful consequences of the use of such weapons.

Forums for negotiations of international treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms limitation must take the relevant environmental norms fully into account.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[27 April 2018]

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Army Command reaffirms that Lebanon possesses no weapons that affect or harm the environment, and that Lebanon supports the agreements on disarmament, arms control and the observance of environmental standards. It is, however, deeply concerned that the Israeli enemy possesses and maintains a massive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, which could be harmful to the environment, even if they are not used.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[14 May 2018]

With regard to environmental norms, we can report that areas contaminated with war materiel were conveyed to the Ministry of Environment for use, safekeeping and administration, through an inter-agency agreement on technical cooperation and allocation whereby the Ministry of Economy and Finance, on behalf of the nation, transferred approximately 55,195.56 hectares containing protected areas, deferred use areas (firing ranges and areas contaminated with war materiel), rural production areas (for forestry development and agroforestry) and rural production areas with conservation forests, located in the sectors to the east and west of the Panama Canal.

In the projects which were executed in areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance, the Ministry of the Environment requested the clean-up of the range, for which the plan for rescue and relocation of forest wildlife had to be carried out, in accordance with Resolution AG-0292 of 14 April 2008, before submitting the environmental impact study and the relevant workplan for environmental and industrial safety, health and hygiene.

The Panama National Police plays a fundamental role in disarmament. Therefore, the Secretary-General of the Central American Integration System offered training to experts in explosives and disarmament in order to analyse and make recommendations to the Central American Security Commission concerning the technical viability and operational relevance of the planning and implementation of the measures and activities contained in the Code of Conduct of the Central American States on the Transfer of Weapons, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials; the technical guidelines for marking the origin of firearms and ammunition for use by civilians, the police force and the military; and the legal framework governing international disarmament, weapons control and security agreements.

These legal measures and norms have allowed our national security institutions to care for our environment and maintain control in areas contaminated by war materiel.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[19 April 2018]

- Qatar possess weapons only internationally sanctioned conventional weapons, and only as much of those weapons as it needs to protect its national security in view of prevailing international and regional conditions. Qatar strives to increase the efficiency of its armaments through maintenance and training, thereby increasing the lifespan of its arsenal and obviating the need to increase the size thereof.

- Qatar is one of the few States that has an independent environmental body within its armed forces. Established in April 2004, the Environment Directorate has comprehensive authority to monitor the application and implementation of environmental standards and requirements in relation to all military activities carried out by the Qatari armed forces.

- The Environment Directorate, in cooperation and coordination with all forces, branches and units, strives to ensure that environmental standards and requirements are observed in all military activities. To that end, the Environment Directorate:

(a) Develops environmental requirements and standards for the armed forces and oversees the implementation thereof;

(b) Participates in the work of all committees that develop military exercises and manoeuvres. The relevant plans are given to the command unit responsible for exercises, in order to avoid damaging the environment or affecting its components or natural characteristics. The Environment Directorate monitors implementation of environment requirements and standards before, during and after the completion of the exercise. It should be noted that the above-mentioned environmental requirements and standards have been disseminated to all Qatari armed forces;

(c) Disposes of expired ammunition and missiles. The disposal process takes place under the supervision of the Environment Directorate, which issues the environmental certification for the disposal site and ensures that environmental safety standards and requirements are observed when disposing of ammunition and missiles. The Environment Directorate also collects samples from the disposal site, both before and after the disposal process. The samples are submitted for laboratory analysis in order to ensure that no environmental contamination has occurred;

(d) Oversees all firing exercises carried out by the various military units;

(e) Participates in the drafting domestic laws concerning the implementation of international conventions.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Ukraine is taking actions in accordance with the implementation agreement between the Cabinet of ministers of Ukraine and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization on the disposal of small arms, light weapons, conventional ammunition and anti-personnel landmines of the PFM-1 type and the agreement between Ukraine and the United States of America concerning assistance to Ukraine in the elimination of strategic nuclear arms and the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The production activities of the enterprise that is the main contractor for the elimination of PFM-1 landmines and SS-24 missile solid rocket motor propellant is certified under international standards, including ISO 14001: 2015 (environmental management systems). These systems have enabled it to: introduce unified requirements for all workers and subcontractors to ensure environmental safety in the enterprise; periodically inform and maintain an open dialogue with all stakeholders on the activities of the enterprise in the field of environmental safety; provide information on the results of the assessment of the impact of the economic activities of the enterprise on environmental objects; and publicly report on the activities of the enterprise in the field of environmental management and maintain strong public relations.

For the disposal of solid rocket propellant from SS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles, the most environmentally friendly method is used, namely, the hydromechanical extraction of the propellant through the use of propellant-processing products in order to produce emulsion explosives. Such technology allows for the use of propellant products as secondary raw materials in emulsion explosives. This technology also meets international requirements. Emulsion explosives have all the required certificates approving their use, including those from State sanitary and environmental inspection authorities. At the same time, emulsion explosives can replace environmentally hazardous TNT-based explosives during blasting operations at mining facilities.

PFM-1 anti-personnel mines and wastes generated during the disposal of solid rocket propellant are destroyed at a specially equipped plant through a high-temperature treatment using a multistage combustion products cleaning system. The plant contains special equipment for the afterburning, filtration and neutralization of combustion products using advanced methods in order to prevent the release of harmful substances into the environment. To eliminate the waste generated during the disposal of solid rocket propellant, the equipment designed by the German company Eisenmann and manufactured and installed with the assistance of the United States is also used.

The hazard category of solid substances formed as a result of the disposal of solid rocket propellant and PFM-1 anti-personnel mines allows for the use of these substances in the construction of industrial facilities and maintenance of highways.